

"If any one of them can explain it," said Alice, (she had grown so large in the last few minutes that she wasn't a bit afraid of interrupting him,) "I'll give him sixpence. *I don't believe there's an atom of meaning in it.*"

The jury all wrote down, on their slates, "*She doesn't believe there's an atom of meaning in it,*" but none of them attempted to explain the paper.

"If there's no meaning in it," said the King, "that saves a world of trouble, you know, as we needn't try to find any. And yet I don't know," he went on, spreading out the verses on his knee, and looking at them with one eye; "I seem to see some meaning in them, after all. '*said I could not swim*—' you ca'n't swim, can you?" he added, turning to the Knave.

The Knave shook his head sadly. "Do I look like it?" he said. (Which he certainly did *not*, being made entirely of cardboard.)

"All right, so far," said the King; and he went on muttering over the verses to himself: "*We know it to be true*'—that's the jury, of course—'*If she should push the matter on*'—that must be the Queen—'*What would become of you?*'—What, indeed!—'*I gave her one, they gave him two*'—why, that must be what he did with the tarts, you know——"

"But it goes on '*they all r*
you,'" said Alice.

"Why, there they are!" said the King, phantly, pointing to the tarts on the table. "The King's evidence can be clearer than *that*. Then again—'*before she had this fit*'—you never had fits, my dear, I think?" he said to the Queen.

"Never!" said the Queen, furiously, throwing an inkstand at the Lizard as she spoke. (The unfortunate Lizard was writing on his slate with one foot, but it made no mark; but he now used the ink, that was trickling down, as long as it lasted.)

"Then the words don't *fit* you," said the King, looking round the court with a dead silence.

"It's a pun!" the King added, and everybody laughed. "Let them give their verdict," the King said, and they waited till the next time that day.